Chapter 14
Case Study 9, Japan: Influence of Tasks on Student's Interaction and Learning in a Telecollaboration Project Between Japan and Spain

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1 Background

As the contact between people of different countries has increased for business, tourism, and studying abroad, the promotion of the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) of students, which is their "ability to understand and relate to people from other countries" (Byram, 1997, p. 5), has become an important objective of foreign language teaching. In Japan, a country with a relatively homogenous culture and little foreign population, since 2014 the Ministry of Education has carried out the Top Global University Project, which supports selected universities to reinforce their international competitiveness and "to develop human resources with a global mindset, who are tolerant and accepting of different cultures, who can contribute to solving global problems and opening up a bright future, [and] who can play a leading role in international society" (MEXT, 2019). To achieve its objectives, however, this program does not take into account the possibilities of online exchanges, focusing on the physical mobility of students and academic staff and the establishment of joint educational programs. In addition, because of the aging of Japanese society and the increasing problem of a workforce shortage, in 2018 the government eased the admission of unskilled workers into Japan (Cabinet of the Government, 2018). All these measures have increased the situations in which Japanese and people from other countries must cooperate and integrate into the same community. Because of this, Japanese universities, especially those with faculties of foreign studies, like our university, should not only help students learn a foreign

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language but also play an important role in promoting their students' ICC and produce people able to become intercultural mediators.

In this case study, we discuss a telecollaboration project between students in Japan and Spain that we carried out because the few opportunities that our students have to interact with Spanish are a handicap for the development of their ICC and competence in Spanish. This was the first experience for both teachers and students. Telecollaboration here is defined as "the engagement of groups of students in online intercultural interaction and collaboration with partner classes from other cultural contexts or geographical locations under the guidance of educators and/or expert facilitators" (Lewis & O'Dowd, 2016, p. 3). However, research has found that "missed opportunities for communication" (Ware, 2005), or "limited student contribution" (Hew & Cheung, 2012), which consists of few interactions and superficial reflection in forum discussions, is a frequent outcome of telecollaborations.

The goals of our action research study are to know the degree of interaction between students and the depth of reflection in the forum discussions of our project, to understand how tasks affected both, and to think out some measures in order to improve future telecollaborations in which Japanese students participate. Our key research question is: *How do the features of pedagogical tasks affect Japanese students' performance when discussing intercultural topics with Spanish students in online forums?*

2 Case Study

2.1 Participants

Participants in Spain consisted of twenty-seven Spanish learners of Japanese of different ages (17–50 years old) and occupations (high-school and university students, and workers), studying in a Japanese Cultural Center associated with a public university. They voluntarily participated in the project, along with two teachers: one Spanish and one Japanese. Participants in Japan were thirty-four Japanese undergraduate students of Hispanic Studies (20–21 years old), and two native Spanish teachers, who, on the one hand, designed and monitored the exchange, and, on the other, participated occasionally in the online forums to foster interaction when it was observed that participants were reluctant to start or continue the conversations. Although participants were divided into six binational forum groups, we will only analyze one group, formed by 11 students (seven Japanese and four Spanish), and focus on explaining the behavior of our seven Japanese students. Among them, JMu, JKo, and JMa were the most proficient students, with a B1 level in Spanish (according to the CEFR), followed by JMh, with an A2+ level, and by JKy, JKa, and JA, with an A2 level. While most of them had never been to any Spanish-speaking country, JMu and JMh, had spent six months in a Mexican university, whereas JMa

had taken courses in Spain for an academic year. Spanish participants were all beginners in Japanese (approximately an A1 level), and only EP had visited Japan. The participants, ED, EA, and EC, stated that they were learning Japanese as they were interested in different aspects of Japanese culture. Due to Spanish participants' low level in Japanese, the exchange was carried out in Spanish, although Spanish students were encouraged to use Japanese to practice their language skills.

2.2 Project Description

2.2.1 Methodology

Students in Japan were taking a third-grade undergraduate course, *Practice of Spanish.* The course aimed to improve students' level in Spanish toward a B1+ (according to the CEFR), and to develop their ICC. The telecollaboration was a compulsory activity which, according to the course's syllabus, represented 80% of the course's mark and lasted for eleven weeks (April–June 2016). We based it on the *Cultura* model (Furstenberg et al., 2001), because it offered a well-structured methodology that allowed better control of the exchange.

As in *Cultura*, in this project, groups of students from both countries discussed in online asynchronous forums their cultural practices, after comparing similar materials from both cultures. *Cultura* recommends an equal usage of L1 and L2, but Spanish was mostly used in this telecollaboration as students in Spain were beginners in Japanese who had only studied the language for six months, three hours a week.

The exchange was organized into nine units with topics promoting comparison between both cultures: (1) Self-introductions, (2) Image of the other country, (3) Stereotypes in the media, (4) Body language, (5) Reaction to situations, (6) Family, (7) Gender roles, (8) Food, (9) Table manners. Each unit was one week long, except for the first two units, which lasted two weeks each so students could familiarize themselves with the project. There were online and in-class tasks for every unit. This, however, only applied to students in Japan, as the exchange could not be implemented in any course of the center in Spain, because its syllabus mainly focuses on language acquisition. And because its teachers are only paid for hours in class, they could not monitor the exchange, apart from an introductory meeting with participants where they explained the characteristics of the telecollaboration, something they organized voluntarily.

During unit 1, students became familiar with the methodology and *Canvas*, the online platform of the project, and introduced themselves to their partners in one general forum. Units 2–9, however, followed a five-step pattern of online and offline activities. First, guided by a set of instructions (Fig. 1), students had to complete an online pre-discussion task (e.g. fill a questionnaire) (Fig. 2) which would provide them with materials for forum discussions.

Objetivo de la actividad	Reflexionar sobre la imagen que tenemos de nuestra cultura y la cultura del país vecino.

Pasos de la actividad	1. ¿Qué imagen tenemos de la cultura de nuestros compañeros? Completa la siguiente encuesta para descubrirlo (<u>**antes del 29 de abril**</u>):
	• Si participas desde el Centro Hispano-Japonés, haz clic <u>**aquí**</u>.
	• Si estudias en KUFS, haz clic <u>**aquí**</u>.
	
	2. Observa los resultados de las dos encuestas.
	3. En el <u>**foro de tu grupo**</u>:
	  a) Explica con qué elementos de la imagen que tienen de nosotros los compañeros del otro país estás de acuerdo y con cuáles no, y por qué.
	  b) Pregunta a tus compañeros por qué piensan de esa manera y da tu opinión sobre sus respuestas.
	  c) Lee sus comentarios sobre la imagen que tenemos de ellos y contesta a sus preguntas.

> **La actividad finaliza a las 12 de la noche del 8 de mayo en Salamanca (las 7 de la mañana del 9 de mayo en Kioto).**
> Si queréis, podéis seguir con vuestros diálogos a través del correo de Canvas.

Fig. 1 Instructions to unit 2

Fig. 2 Questionnaire to unit 2

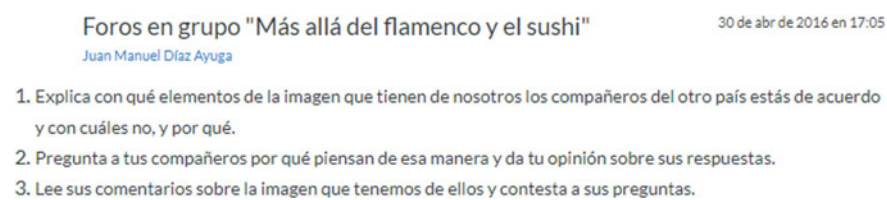¿Qué palabras o conceptos asocias con "España"? (Escribe, al menos, 5) *

Tu respuesta

¿Cómo son los españoles? Defínelos con 5 adjetivos. Sé sincero. *

Tu respuesta

¿Crees que estas afirmaciones son verdaderas o que son falsas? *

	Verdadero	Falso
Los españoles no suelen dormir la siesta.	○	○
Los españoles tienen muchas vacaciones y días festivos.	○	○
Muchos españoles beben vino todos los días.	○	○
En las universidades españolas es necesario estudiar mucho para graduarse.	○	○
Los estudiantes españoles muchas veces llegan tarde a clase.	○	○

Foros en grupo "Más allá del flamenco y el sushi"   30 de abr de 2016 en 17:05

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1. Explica con qué elementos de la imagen que tienen de nosotros los compañeros del otro país estás de acuerdo
   y con cuáles no, y por qué.

2. Pregunta a tus compañeros por qué piensan de esa manera y da tu opinión sobre sus respuestas.

3. Lee sus comentarios sobre la imagen que tenemos de ellos y contesta a sus preguntas.

Fig. 3 Questions for discussion in unit 2

Secondly, students analyzed individually such materials with the help of guiding questions (e.g. "Name which aspects of the image your exchange partners have about your country and culture you agree and disagree with, and explain why") (Fig. 3). They did this as a homework task in order to have enough time to read and reflect on the questions.

Thirdly, divided into six binational groups of 9–11 students, participants discussed the unit topic in online asynchronous forums, and contrasted their individual analysis with the others. The fourth step was devoted to an in-class face-to-face plenary discussion entirely in Spanish, which could only take place among students in Japan. Each class was 90 minutes long, and, in the first half, guided by their Spanish teacher, students expressed what individual conclusions they had drawn from their online discussions and compared their answers with their partners'. During the discussion, the teacher showed relevant data from official information sources (e.g. OECD, Japanese Statistics Bureau) so learners could check their conclusions with reliable information.

Using the information shared in the discussion, students had to arrive orally to some common conclusions. At the end of the discussion, each group of three and four students posted its observations and conclusions from the lesson in a new online forum, available to all participants, so their partners in Spain could react to what they had talked about in class (Fig. 4).

In the second half of the class, students were introduced to the next unit, and undertook pre-task activities which focused on the linguistic and cultural resources they would need to engage in the following individual online discussion in Spanish (Fig. 5).

While Spanish students were not assessed by their teachers, Japanese students, who were taking a credit-bearing course, were evaluated for their involvement in the online forums, on a scale of 0–50 marks, based on the completion of tasks, the level and depth in their analysis, and their competence in written Spanish. In their in-class discussions, also on a scale of 0–50 marks, along with their level in oral Spanish, their ability to understand and draw conclusions from the online interactions was assessed. Both online and offline tasks represented 80% of the course's mark. The remaining 20% was for an oral group presentation of one of the topics studied, where students' abilities to establish contrasts between cultures and to argue using data from the exchange were assessed, on a scale of 0–100 marks.

Fig. 4 Conclusions written by Japanese students

Fig. 5 Pre-task activity for
unit 2

2.2.2   Task Content and Task Design

In order to describe task features, a useful concept is task content. One element of task content is the topic. Discussion topics in our project were selected by teachers in both countries together. We did not include highly controversial topics (like religion or politics) because conflicts may hinder the discussions (Helm, 2016; Ware, 2005), but we included gender roles, stereotypes, and the image of the other's country, which are "riskier" than the rest. Furthermore, the interest students have for the topic can affect their performance. A second element is the type of activity required, which can be information exchange, comparison and analysis, and product creation (O'Dowd & Ware, 2009). In our project, tasks focused on the two first types because the third one is more complex and requires high involvement of all parties.

A second concept for characterizing tasks is task design, which is composed by task complexity and task structure (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). Task complexity is affected by many factors, but we only consider the level of abstraction that the discussion requires and the level of difficulty perceived by students. Task structure refers to the organization of instructions and data provided to complete the task. Concrete instructions about what to do and how, concrete prompt questions in the guidelines, and questionnaire results focusing on few issues as material for discussion increases the organization; while looser instructions and more open questions, and a wide range of materials or issues to analyze reduces organization. Task features in each unit of our project are presented in the Appendix 1.

2.2.3   Data Collection and Analysis

Before starting the project, students had a guidance session on the aims and the methodology of the project, and how to use *Canvas*. Then, they did the online activities and posted in the forums every week following the guidelines of each unit (see Sect. 2.2.1). We collected and analyzed the data after the project ended, proceeding as follows.

First, we conducted a questionnaire on students' evaluation of the project. Data on task interest and difficulty of each unit according to the Japanese students (see Appendix 1) come from this questionnaire.

Second, we did a quantitative analysis of the students' postings in order to examine the degree of participation and interaction between students in each unit. As an indicator of participation, we analyzed the number of postings per student. Regarding interaction, we used two types of indicators. One is the percentage of replies that students of one country did to the postings of the students of the other country. The second one is the length of the threads (chains of postings). If one posting does not receive any reply, the length of the thread is only one post; if one posting receives two replies, or there is a chain post-reply-reply to the reply, the length of the thread is three posts. For the analysis of interaction between students we excluded the postings of threads in which instructors participated, in order to avoid any influence on the results of the interaction between students and instructors.

Third, we did a discourse analysis of all postings' transcripts of each unit in order to evaluate the type of learning associated with each message. Byram (1997) distinguishes between shallow and deep learning in the acquisition of ICC. Shallow learning consists of the uncritical acquisition of knowledge coming from other people, and the learner only repeats it without showing understanding. For example, in the message: "Well, according to the questionnaire results, the Japanese are hard workers, respectful, serious, punctual…" (JKo, Unit 2), the student shows the acquisition of knowledge on the image about Japanese people held by Spanish, but he does not do any analysis. And, in the message: "Hello, EP. What you say is very interesting. Now I see that I had a false image [about Spain] that I got from the media. I thought the employment system was not strict" (JMu, Unit 2), the Japanese student acknowledges having acquired new knowledge from her Spanish partner.

On the other hand, deep learning consists of the learner's active search and critical analysis of new knowledge in order to understand it. Deep learning is shown by the learner's "ability to use ideas in new situations, to relate factual knowledge to an argument, to draw upon logical relationships within frameworks of knowledge, to interpret and come to sound conclusions" (Byram, 1997, p. 95). For example, in the next message, a Japanese student, elaborating on the postings of two other students, suggests a hypothesis to explain the difference in the way of expressing feelings in Spain and Japan:

> *According to ED, the Japanese way of expressing feelings can look like cold or strange to foreigners. Although we feel happiness or sadness (…) we have the tendency to hide our real feeling and do not use much body language. And, as JKo said, we are not used to hugging and kissing. I think that this is because such greetings [skinship] were not introduced into Japan from other cultures until the 19ths century after a long period of isolation (…) (JMa, Unit 6).*

In addition, we include a third category, null learning, which are the postings with contents that do not show any learning related to the project (although their contents may contribute to other students learning). For example, the message: "Hello everybody. I send [the video with] my gestures?" (EP, Unit 4) is just social talk for sending a video. Also, in the message: "I like the atmosphere in this video. Everybody is happy dancing and eating. Do people dance when they have a party?" (JKy, Unit 3), the student just describes what he has seen, without showing any relevant learning.

In order to guarantee the reliability, the two teachers in Japan separately classified the posts according to previously decided criteria (see Appendix 2), reaching a 71.4% of coincidence, and then discussed the classification of posts further until reaching a 100% agreement.

3   Results

3.1   Participation and Interaction in the Forums

Along the project, students did 159 postings, 73 were from Spanish students and 86 from Japanese students. However, the participation of the Japanese students is low, with less than two postings per participant in each unit except in units 3 and 4 (Table 1). Unit 3 stands out for the high number of postings, but this is because, misinterpreting the instructions, Japanese students commented on each video in separate postings.

The results of interaction between students are presented in Table 2. The interaction of the Japanese students with the Spanish students is also low, as shown by

Table 1 Participation (in descending order, according to the number of posts per student)

Spain				Japan			
Unit	Posts	Students*	Posts per student	Unit	Posts	Students*	Posts per student
6	8	2	4	3	28	4	7
4	11	3	3.7	4	8	3	2.7
3	14	4	3.5	2	9	5	1.8
2	11	4	2.7	7	8	5	1.6
5	11	4	2.7	9	9	6	1.5
7	8	3	2.7	6	10	7	1.4
9	6	3	2	5	6	5	1.2
8	4	3	1.3	8	8	7	1.1
Total	73	3.25	2.82	Total	86	5.25	2.29

*Spanish students in the group: four. Japanese students in the group: five (units 2 to 5), seven (units 6 to 9)

Table 2 Interaction per unit (in descending order)*

REPLIES								THREAD LENGTH	
Spain				Japan				Total	
Unit	Replies	Posts	%	Unit	Replies	Posts	%	Unit	Average number of posts
5	8	9	88.9	4	7	8	87.5	4	3.8
6	6	8	75.0	9	5	7	71.4	9	3.25
3	10	14	71.4	6	4	10	40.0	5	3.0
9	4	6	66.7	5	3	6	33.3	6	2.25
4	7	11	63.6	7	2	6	33.3	3	1.86
7	3	6	50.0	3	8	25	32.0	7	1.71
2	5	10	50.0	2	2	7	28.6	2	1.70
8	0	4	0.0	8	0	5	0.0	8	1.0
Total	43	68	63.2	Total	30	74	40.5	Total	2.06

*17 postings of the students in interaction with the instructors are excluded

an average reply of 40.5% to the postings of the Spanish students, while the average reply of Spanish students to the postings of the Japanese students is higher: 63.2%. Besides, the discussions do not develop much through the threads (chains of posts and replies, see Sect. 2.2.3): the total average length of the threads is 2.06 posts, and only three units (4, 9, and 5) have a thread length average of three or more posts. These results showing limited and surface-level online participation are consistent with those reported in similar telecollaboration projects (e.g., Hew & Cheung, 2012; O'Dowd & Ritter, 2006).

There are important differences between the results of different units. Focusing on the percentage of replies from the Japanese students and the average thread length of each unit, we see that the higher level of interaction in units 4 (body language) and 9 (table manners) contrasts with the lower interaction in units 2 (image of the country), 3 (stereotypes in the media), 7 (gender) and 8 (food). One cause of this difference is that the topics of units 4 and 9 are "safer" and more familiar to the students than the topics of units 2, 3, and 7, and were evaluated by students as more interesting. Though O'Dowd (2016) believes that the inclusion of critical discussion themes such as politics may serve better at promoting in-depth discussion and critical thinking in telecollaboration, the current finding reminds educators of the importance of topic familiarity and students' interest in learning. A second cause is the difficulty (according to students) of units 2, 3, and 7, in which Spanish students posted some long and complex messages. In addition, in units 4 and 9 the guidelines explicitly encouraged participants to interact with each other (e.g. "Ask your partner how they behave when eating with other people"), whereas in units 3, 7, and 8 we allowed more flexibility in how participants interpreted the guidelines (e.g. "Explain your opinion. Do you share your partners' opinions?"). Although unit 2 has also concrete guidelines, the lack of familiarity with the project at that early stage probably affected students' interaction. Lack of interaction in unit 8 is due to the fact that it just requires students to present information. Finally, units 5 and 6 present a medium level of interaction. Students reported a medium level of difficulty (unit 6) and interest for these units, topics are not risky, and questionnaire results facilitate discussion; however, guidelines are less concrete about what to ask to other students in the forum.

3.2   Types of Learning in the Forums

The results of the discourse analysis show that only 16.3% of the posts involve deep learning, while 48.4% is shallow, and 35.2% is null. This is one of the most common outcomes in telecollaborations: exchanges of information without reflection (Hew & Cheung, 2012).

The low level of deep learning can be explained, in general, by the scarce percentage of interaction, which reduced the opportunities to develop reflections. However, the reluctance to question others' ideas, which may cause a threat to others' face, also lead to "low-level knowledge construction" (Hew & Cheung, 2012, p. 23).

In addition, due to the proficiency level of the Japanese students, the use of Spanish may also hinder their ability to develop and argue their answers.

However, the distribution of types of learning varies from unit to unit. Table 3 presents the distribution of deep learning in front of shallow and null learning in each unit.

In general, levels of deep learning shown by Japanese students in the various units are lower than those shown by Spanish students; being the only exception of the latter units 9 and 4. This is because most messages posted by Japanese students only superficially describe materials or state an opinion without arguments. Units 9, 6, and 5 show higher levels of deep learning, but only four students (JMu, JKo, JMa, JA) write deep learning messages.

If we focus on Japanese students' performance and their type of learning, we realize that differences between units where they show a higher level of deep learning (9, 6, and 5) and those with a lower level can be explained by the following factors. (1) *Students' familiarity with the topic*: In units 9, 6, and 5, Japanese learners discuss familiar topics (Japanese family, habits, and manners), while in units 7 and 3 they engage in more abstract issues (gender roles and stereotypes). (2) *Task structure*: Unlike units 7 and 3 that include a various range of materials (different topics in the questionnaire, a list of 16 videos), and loose instructions and aims ("discuss," "describe," and "comment"), units 9, 6, and 5 offer learners limited learning materials (one video or subtopic) and instructions are more concrete. Students, thus, may have encountered challenges such as the overburden of pre-telecollaboration reading and loss of directions in discussion, when they attempted to engage in meaningful telecollaborative exchange. (3) *Task type*: Low percentages of deep learning in units 4 and 8 can also be the result of the task type (exchange of information) which does not require any deeper analysis.

4 Pedagogical Principles

Based on this case study of a telecollaborative project, six pedagogical principles are presented:

(a) *Pre-telecollaboration training*: before the exchange starts, students should be instructed in how to interact with their partners, so they may avoid posting long or complex messages, with too many ideas, or unrelated to the rest; and how to analyze and reflect on cultural materials, so they can develop more deep learning posts. For this reason, teachers should explain the differences between deep, shallow, and null learning posts by adopting an exemplar approach (e.g., Carless & Chan, 2017).

(b) *Activities design*: activities should be designed in a way that requires learners to go beyond simple information exchange. In-depth discussion such as reflection about cultural practices or proposal of practical solutions to problems is more constructive to telecollaboration learning.

Table 3 Types of learning per unit (in descending order, according to the percentage of posts)

Deep						Shallow/Null					
Spain			Japan			Spain			Japan		
Unit	Number of posts	%	Unit	Number of posts	%	Unit	Number of posts	%	Unit	Number of posts	%
5	5	45.5	9	2	22.2	9	6	100	8	8	100
6	3	37.5	6	2	20.0	8	4	100	7	8	100
7	3	37.5	5	1	16.7	4	11	100	3	28	100
3	5	35.7	4	1	12.5	2	8	72.7	2	8	88.9
2	3	27.3	2	1	11.1	3	9	64.3	4	7	87.5
4	0	0.0	3	0	0.0	7	5	62.5	5	5	83.3
8	0	0.0	7	0	0.0	6	5	62.5	6	8	80.0
9	0	0.0	8	0	0.0	5	6	54.5	9	7	77.8
Total	19	26.0	Total	7	8.1	Total	54	74.0	Total	79	91.9

(c) *Topic content*: topics that may be controversial should be depersonalized, so students can be confident when discussing them, without the need to reveal their privacy, especially when they may not have enough trust with their partners. Also, with non-controversial topics, teachers should consider the design of questions and guide the discussion toward a meaningful and in-depth direction.

(d) *Task structure*: instructions and pre-discussion materials should focus the topic on one issue, facilitate comparison of data and make explicit the aim of the discussion; they should be concrete and present specific prompt questions, and avoid loose directions and general questions. Prompt questions should appear on the instructions page, not in a separate link.

(e) *Completion deadlines*: to guarantee that students avoid late posting and have enough time to interact, deadlines for completing each task phase should be established.

(f) *Teachers' role*: teachers should intervene in forum discussions in order to recommend students how to interact, to clarify unresolved issues, or to focus students' discussions on the task's objective. In addition, teachers' posts should include prompt questions such as "ask your partners" that will foster interaction among students, instead of a direct answer to the teacher's post.

Globalization and the spreading of online relationships are becoming more prevalent in our lives. Universities have the responsibility of preparing students for this by way of promoting their ICC and critical thinking. However, not all students are comfortable with interacting online in their L2, Japanese university students, in particular, show a low level in this competency. We suggest that developing structured telecollaboration projects, such as described in this case study, is a way forward to empower these learners and help prepare them better for future intercultural communication practices.

Appendices

Appendix 1:   Characteristics of the online tasks

| | | Task content | | Task design | | |
| | | | | Task complexity | | Task structure |
Topic	Task type	Topic risk	Topic interest* (0-5)	Difficulty** (0-10)	Topic abstraction	Factors increasing (+) or reducing (-) organization
Unit 1: Self introduction	- To record a video - Information exchange	▼	○ (2.9)	▽ (4.3)	▼	▲ + Concrete instructions + Concrete prompt questions - Prompt questions are in a separated link
Unit 2: Image of the other country	- To answer a questionnaire - Comparison and analysis	△	○ (3.2)	○ (5.2)	○	△ + Concrete instructions + Questionnaire results - Several topics
Unit 3: Stereotypes in the media	- To watch videos - Comparison and analysis	△	○ (2.9)	△ (5.6)	△	▽ + Concrete prompt questions +/- Combination of concrete and loose instructions - Prompt questions are in a separated link - Several videos for analysis - Several topics
Unit 4: Body language	- To record a video - Information exchange	▼	△ (3.5)	○ (5.1)	▼	▲ + Concrete instructions + Concrete prompt questions + Focus on one topic - Prompt questions are in a separated link
Unit 5: Reaction to situations	- To answer a questionnaire - Comparison and analysis	○	○ (3.1)	△ (5.6)	○	△ + Questionnaire results + Focus on one topic +/- Combination of concrete and loose instructions
Unit 6: The family	- To watch a movie - Comparison and analysis	○	○ (3.2)	○ (5.2)	○	○ + Focus on one movie +/- Combination of concrete and open prompt questions - Loose instructions - Long video for analysis
Unit 7: Gender roles	- To answer a questionnaire - Comparison and analysis	△	○ (3.1)	△ (5.9)	△	▽ + Questionnaire results - Loose instructions - Open prompt questions -Several topics
Unit 8: Food	- To explain a recipe - Information exchange	▼	△ (3.4)	○ (4.7)	▼	△ +Focus on one topic +/- Combination of concrete and loose instructions
Unit 9: Table manners	- To watch a video - Comparison and analysis	○	△ (3.3)	○ (5.2)	▽	▲ + Concrete instructions + Concrete prompt questions + Focus on one topic

▲ High; △ Medium-high; ○ Medium; ▽ Medium-low; ▼ Low
* Average of students' responses, on a scale of 0 to 5, to a post-project questionnaire.
** Average of students' responses, on a scale of 0 to 10, to a post-project questionnaire.

Appendix 2: Criteria for the classification of the types of learning in the postings

Shallow Learning
- Repeats what another posting said, or acknowledges that the content of another posting was new knowledge, without any analysis.
- Describes the results of the pre-discussion questionnaire (which is new knowledge about the thinking of the students from both countries) without any analysis.
- Identifies some cultural elements in the pre-discussion materials (videos, movies) without interpreting them.
- Provides some data that the student searched for, but does not make any comment.

- Tries to explain something, but the argument is too poor to show understanding, or presents and opinion without argumentation.

Deep Learning
- Analyzes the contents of other postings.
- Analyzes the results of the pre-discussion questionnaire.
- Analyzes other pre-discussion materials.
- Provides data with comments and/or examples that show an understanding of the cultural implications of the data.
- Relates facts to concepts, or to other facts, with logical arguments in order to construct a hypothesis and/or to support an opinion.

Null Learning
- The message is incomprehensible.
- Makes social talk.
- The provided information is nothing more than common knowledge without showing any learning related to the project.
- Describes what the student has seen in the pre-discussion materials without showing any learning related to the project (e.g., makes a literal description of what he/she has seen in the video).

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